

suspended if not inverted. It could mean that he would break his promise and not come at all -- or that, since he always kept his promise, he must have promised not to come. Her praise of what he could not have "promised" (or he would have done it) is a veiled criticism of people's saying one thing and meaning another -- by saying one thing and meaning another. Her letter amounts to a rather subtle strategy of trapping the father by praising him for doing things, when only the wrong things are getting done -- or nothing at all.

The authorities did not hesitate to criticize Miss Adams's correspondence and correspondents alike, on the basis of class and other value judgements. In the Clinical Record for November 26, 1917 (the day of her discharge), the writer (C.Mc.C.-- Dr. McClenahan), stated that she had been receiving more mail than the rest of the patients together, and had opened a correspondence with a "matrimonial bureau" in the United States. She had represented herself as a nurse and never indicated that "she was a patient." A man had been to see her claiming to be a "distant cousin," and been turned away -- one of her suitors. She had also written "many letters" in a "persistent" effort to get out of the Asylum and had managed to enlist a lawyer on her behalf. Even after her letters were "stopped" she enlisted other patients to mail them for her and arranged to pick up her return mail at a local drug store (Lawrence's).

According to the doctor she was ready "to hitch up with anything at all," and moreover "did not seem to realize the class of people she was dealing with," as he evidently did through their letters. At times it is not entirely clear whether he is talking about the letters, their writers, or both: "crude, words often being mis-spelled, and [showing] an entire lack of education." When caught she was condemned for having "resented ... very strongly, and [become] very threatening and abusive about" this intervention in what she considered her private affairs, but when she was quiet and docile she was implicitly criticized for duplicity: "When spoken to she was always very nice and rarely had any complaint to make, but would sit down shortly afterwards and write about all sorts of ill treatment." A classic "Catch 22" quandary.

She seems to have appreciated only too well, as she indicates in her letter to Dr. McClenahan of October 27, 1917, that like any other "facts" of her case, the letters could be used as evidence against the very argument she intended them to make. Her letters had not only been "confiscated" but "criticized" as